

same religious philosophies will have an advantage over those applying for employment that do not subscribe to the same views. Workers can now lose job opportunities through blatant religious discrimination at places our tax dollars are funding. This bill turns WIA into a competitive service provider, rather than an equal opportunity resource for our Nation's unemployed workers.

This is not the way we can help our Nation's workforce, and I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 27 as it is written.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will rise informally.

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. McKEON) assumed the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McKEON). The Committee will resume its sitting.

JOB TRAINING IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. Fortuño).

Mr. FORTUÑO. Mr. Chairman, back in 1998, Congress enacted the Workforce Investment Act, which established a system for a one-stop career centers aimed at providing one convenient central location to offer job training and other employment-related services.

While these reforms have largely been a success, the system is still hampered by inefficiency, duplication, and unnecessary bureaucracy. The bill that we are approving today aims to strengthen training services for job seekers accomplishes these goals in several ways: Particularly by streamlining bureaucracy and eliminating duplication; consolidating the three adult WIA training programs, giving States and local communities greater flexibility, and enabling more job seekers to be served with no reduction in services; removing arbitrary barriers that prevent individuals from accessing job training services immediately; strengthening partnerships between

local businesses, communities colleges and the local one-stop delivery system; enhancing vocational rehabilitation to help individuals with disabilities; and improving allocation and literacy for adults to ensure they gain the knowledge and skills necessary to find employment, including language proficiency.

I want to thank the chairman on the committee for adopting two amendments I have introduced to enhance further employability of the limited English proficient calculation by providing necessary skills, training and English language instruction. I believe this will help tremendously, especially the Hispanic populations throughout the country.

I believe that the backbone of a strong economy and a strong society is a well-trained and highly-skilled workforce. The bill on the floor today is an excellent source to achieve that goal. This bill includes a number of reforms aimed at strengthening our Nation's job training system and better engaging the business community to improve job training services.

It accomplishes this by requiring State and local workforce investment boards to ensure the job training programs reflect the employment needs in local areas; also allowing training for currently employed workers so employers can upgrade workers' skills and avoid layoffs; encouraging the highest caliber providers, including community colleges, to offer training through the one-stop system; leveraging other public and private resources to increase training opportunities; and increasing connections to economic development programs.

The bill reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1993, the primary Federal program designed to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and retain employment to live independently; and furthermore, it includes transition services for students with disabilities moving from secondary education into post-secondary activities that can only be determined as a possible alternative to address the needs of those in special needs.

I am convinced that H.R. 27 is a valuable tool to achieve that goal we all have set our minds to. And that is none other than creating a better and strong economy and society that will be prepared to compete in a changing and demanding new world that rises as we speak.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Chairman, I rise to join the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), in a colloquy on how certain provisions in this legislation might affect the governance of WIA funding in New York State.

This legislation provides governors the authority to take a portion of funds provided through the authorizing

statutes of mandatory partner programs to cover the infrastructure costs of one-stop centers. I am concerned that this may create a constitutional conflict between the Governor of New York and the Board of Regents.

I offered an amendment to remedy this conflict in committee. The amendment I offered was language that is identical to language already included in S. 9. I would ask the chairman if he would commit to working with me and my New York colleagues in conference to resolve this issue.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. MCCARTHY. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I pledge to work with her and other interested members of the New York delegation during conference on this legislation to identify and remedy any governance problems which New York may have under this bill. However, it is not clear that the language that the gentlewoman offered in committee that is included in S. 9 fixes the problem in New York and could have other unintended consequences in New York and other States.

So my goal is to ensure that the mandatory partners contribute to the cost of the one-stop infrastructure without causing constitutional problems for States. And as I suggested, I will continue to work with the gentlewoman to achieve this.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the chairman for agreeing to work with us on this issue of importance to New York.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield two minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 27, the Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.

The Workforce Investment Act was one of these pieces of legislation that actually helps people. It was passed back in 1998. Unfortunately, this is a step backward as it comes before us today. The bill now here would create block grants to fund the adult dislocated worker and employment service programs. And as we know, funding through nearly every past block grant program has led to decreases in funding in just about every education or labor program that was block granted.

In addition, the proposal here would reduce and restrict services for in-school youths. It would fund one-stop infrastructure by siphoning off funds used to serve veterans and individuals with disabilities; and importantly, the legislation before us here would allow discrimination in hiring based on individuals's religious beliefs.

Under current religious law, organizations are free to make employment decisions using religious criteria with their own money. Why should we allow organizations to discriminate with taxpayer dollars? It really would roll back